Utilization of wasteland in Maharashtra

*352. DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) how much wasteland was put to agricultural and horticultural use in Maharashtra during the last three years;

(b) how much was the total wasteland three years ago and what it is now in Maharashtra;

(c) how much money was given to the State Government during this period; and

(d) what steps are being taken to develop the wastelands ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (DEPARTMENT OF WASTELANDS DEVELOPMENT) (COL. RAM SINGH) : (a) An area of 90377 hectares of wastelands has been brought under horticulture in the State of Maharashtra during the last three years. Due to the degraded nature of wastelands, such lands in Maharashtra are brought under horticulture rather than under seasonal crops.

(b) No official estimate of the extent of wastelands in Maharashtra is available.

(c) No funds have been given specifically for the promotion of horticulture on wastelands to the State of Maharashtra.

(d) The State Government is developing wastelands on microwatershed basis in the villages selected under the Water Conservation Programmes through various schemes, which include Employment Guarantee Scheme and Jawahar Rozgar Yojana which promotes, among other activities, Horticulture and Social Forestry. Besides the above schemes, the Department of Wastelands Development, Government of India, is also promoting development of wastelands through its Integrated Wastelands Development Projects and Grants-in-Aid Schemes in the State.

Inquiry into Sahara Boeing Crash

*353. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the preliminary inquiry by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation into the Sahara Boeing Crash has revealed that the cause of the accident was negligence on the part of maintenance and operations staff of aircraft ;

(b) whether Government have recently issued stringent rules and safety regulations for the aircrafts; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD) : (a) A Court of Inquiry is being appointed by the Government under Rule 75 of the Aircraft Rules, 1937 to investigate the accident. The cause of the accident will be known only after completion of the investigations.

(b) and (c) At the meeting with private air taxi operators, Indian Airlines and Air India convened by DGCA on 18th and 19th March, 94, the operators have been advised to take the following additional measures to enhance safety of operations :—

(i) All pilots should practise flight procedures during emergencies on simulators during refresher courses;

(ii) Overhaul life of aircraft components should be reviewed; and

(iii) Air India and Indian Airlines should establish separate quality control and quality assurance divisions in view of their large-scale operations.

Other steps taken to improve airworthiness standard of aircraft and safety of aircraft operations include strengthening of quality control set up, prompt rectification of snags, establishment of adequate maintenance facilities, monitoring of Digital Flight Data Recorder and Cockpit Voice Recorder readouts, pre-flight medical examination of crew observance of special precautions while operating to/from short airfields, adherence to standard operating procedures, implementation of recommendations emanating from accident, investigation reports etc.

Displeasure of IMF on India's defence budget

*354. SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that International Monetary Fund has expressed its displeasure on estimated defence budget of India;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to make any cut in the defence budget; and

(c) if not, the reaction of Government on the news item which appeared in Dainik Jagaran of 2nd March, 1994 in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI MALLIKARJUN) : (a) No such communication has been received by the Govt. from the IMF.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Our defence allocations will continue to be determined primarily by our threat perceptions and security concerns.